

Compendium of Budget Information for the 2014 General Session

Business, Economic Development, and Labor Appropriations Subcommittee

Agency: Public Service Commission

Line Item: Speech and Hearing Impaired

Function

The Speech and Hearing Impaired Program provides telecommunication access twenty-four hours a day to hearing or speech impaired persons through Relay Utah. Services are now contracted through Hamilton Relay Services, Inc. Hamilton employs computer personnel who receive text messages from a TTY (text telephone) and other updated telecommunications equipment. An example of this equipment includes amplified telephones or CapTel phones that amplify sound and provide written text messaging to the person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Background

The commission loans specialized telecommunications equipment to individuals who have hearing or speech barriers. The commission has an advertising campaign to educate the deaf and the hearing public about 7-1-1, telecommunication equipment distribution, and services provided through the telecommunication relay service.

Funds collected and carried over from the previous year are used to fund the complete program.

The FCC encourages states to promote the implementation of additional technologies to allow the deaf and hard of hearing to enjoy functional equivalency which complements the services already provided by Relay Utah. With the implementation of cell phone distribution, technology, and video relay services, there is a shift nationally in the way deaf populations communicate. The major activity of this budget is determined by the demand for services and equipment utilizing new technology. An increase in demand and usage creates additional costs throughout Utah.

Statutory Authority

The Public Service Commission (PSC) under UCA 54-8b-10 administers the Relay Utah program to provide hearing and speech-impaired persons with telecommunication devices.

Intent Language

Under Section 63J-1-603 of the Utah Code, the Legislature intends that appropriations provided for the Public Service Commission for Speech and Hearing Impaired programs in Item 38, Chapter 10 Laws of Utah 2012 shall not lapse at the close of Fiscal Year 2013. The use of any nonlapsing funds is limited to providing telecommunication devices and equipment to individuals who are deaf or speech impaired.

Performance

Customer service, equipment delivery, and financial stability are the top three performance measures identified for monitoring the success of this program.

Customer Service

PSC has set a goal to respond to all complaints within two business days and resolve issues/problems. For FY 2014, when a Relay Utah client notifies PSC with an issue or concern, a representative from the PSC will attempt to contact the client within two business days to correct or make arrangements to rectify the problem.

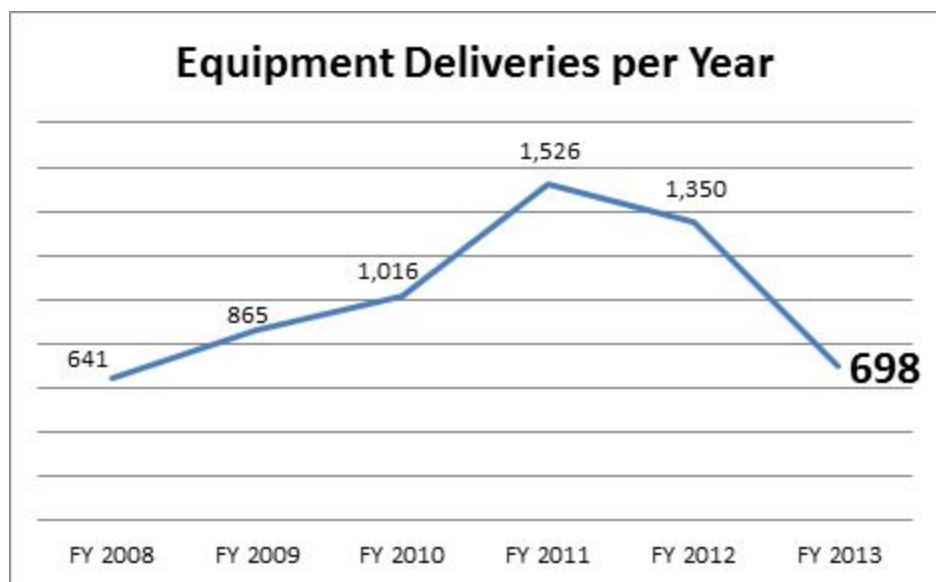
Equipment

The goal for equipment delivery is to track and analyze the number of equipment deliveries per year and monitor technology trends of what deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-disabled individuals need and prefer.

FY 2012 reflects a slight decline in equipment deliveries. Hamilton Relay, who is contracted by the PSC, provides outreach, education and promotion for Relay Utah. For a period of four months, Hamilton had a change in personnel and did not have an employee available for outreach for Relay Utah. This four-month gap lowered the overall number of equipment deliveries for FY 2012.

The following items outline recent changes that have resulted in fewer deliveries for FY 2013:

1. The Public Service Commission (Commission) began administering the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) in year 2012 which has required a significant amount of personnel time to administer. According to the most recent information, this program is scheduled to conclude at the end of FY 2015 which should free up personnel resources.
2. The Commission has been examining applicants to carefully ensure that candidates are qualified and can actually benefit from the Relay Utah program. Furthermore, delivery numbers that are reported are now more accurate. Staff only report actual deliveries of equipment. Follow up visits regarding defective equipment or further training needs are not included with the delivery numbers.
3. The number of applications declined in FY 2013. The Commission is carefully working with the Relay Utah coordinator through a contract with Hamilton who provides marketing and outreach services within the state of Utah to further communicate the benefits of the program.



Financial Stability

The PSC would like to maintain a healthy fund balance to allow the program to remain solvent and vibrant. The goal is to maintain a sufficient fund balance to provide quality training and equipment for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or speech disabled.

Funding Detail

For more detail about a particular source of finance or organizational unit, click a linked entry in the left column of the table(s) below.

Sources of Finance	2013 Actual	2014 Approp	2014 Change	2014 Revised	2015 Change	2015 Approp
Dedicated Credits Revenue	\$2,110,300	\$1,871,500	\$300	\$1,871,800	(\$668,200)	\$1,203,600
Beginning Nonlapsing	\$1,956,400	\$2,060,600	\$1,056,500	\$3,117,100	(\$3,117,100)	\$0
Closing Nonlapsing	(\$3,117,100)	(\$2,060,600)	\$2,060,600	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$949,600	\$1,871,500	\$3,117,400	\$4,988,900	(\$3,785,300)	\$1,203,600

Programs	2013 Actual	2014 Approp	2014 Change	2014 Revised	2015 Change	2015 Approp
Speech and Hearing Impaired	\$949,600	\$1,871,500	\$3,117,400	\$4,988,900	(\$3,785,300)	\$1,203,600
Total	\$949,600	\$1,871,500	\$3,117,400	\$4,988,900	(\$3,785,300)	\$1,203,600

Categories of Expenditure	2013 Actual	2014 Approp	2014 Change	2014 Revised	2015 Change	2015 Approp
Personnel Services	\$200	\$2,200	\$300	\$2,500	\$166,100	\$168,600
In-state Travel	\$12,600	\$25,900	\$0	\$25,900	(\$12,200)	\$13,700
Out-of-state Travel	\$3,000	\$2,700	\$0	\$2,700	\$1,800	\$4,500
Current Expense	\$933,800	\$1,839,200	\$3,117,100	\$4,956,300	(\$3,946,500)	\$1,009,800
DP Current Expense	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500	\$5,500	\$7,000
Total	\$949,600	\$1,871,500	\$3,117,400	\$4,988,900	(\$3,785,300)	\$1,203,600

COBI contains unaudited data as presented to the Legislature by state agencies at the time of publication. For audited financial data see the State of Utah's Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports.